

Board of Selectmen

Town of Upton



Massachusetts

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Kenneth E. Picard, Chairman

James A. Brochu

Robert J. Fleming

TOWN MANAGER

Blythe C. Robinson

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Memo To: Board of Selectmen
From: Blythe C. Robinson, Town Manager
Date: March 8, 2013
Re: Town Manager's Weekly Report

Warrants:

- Payroll: \$ 77,710.11
- Expense Warrant: \$269,970.48

For Your Information/Follow Up:

- We have received what appears to be good news with regard to the February 8/9 snowstorm. It appears that the numbers reported by communities in our county are sufficient to meet the threshold for FEMA reimbursement. We are awaiting more details on this but it may help us recover 75% of our eligible costs.
- As I had reported earlier this year the annual audit of our wages for the purposes of paying the appropriate amount for workers compensation had resulted in an invoice for an additional \$7,200 in premium. This was quite a surprise as we are usually in the situation of receiving a credit annually. We had the audit done a second time and that effort was worthwhile, we are now receiving a credit of \$711. It was clear that the auditor had incorrectly classified some employees, and we are glad it is resolved in the Town's favor.
- It seems as though federal budget cuts will have a direct effect on town operations to some extent. We have been informed that we can expect a 2% drop in Medicare reimbursement which impacts us in the area of ambulance fees for service. We currently bill twice the Medicare rate for a run when a patient is transported (there is no reimbursement if we don't transport).
- In one of our recent storms we had a very unfortunate incident in which approximately 21 mailboxes on Grove and Prospect Streets were damaged while salt/sanding operations were underway. The wing plows on the truck on that route was not fully tied up and the mailboxes were directly hit in the process. The residents affected by this issue were very understandably upset and not satisfied to be compensated under our current policy of \$20 for a damaged post and \$20 for a box. We have investigated this with the assistance of the Police Department and have offered to fully compensate those box owners for their loss. On behalf of the Town I want to add my sincere apology for the occurrence of this unnecessary event, and that we are taking steps to ensure that it does not happen again.

- Please join me in welcoming Kenny Costa as our interim Town Accountant! Kenny started today despite a larger than expected snow storm, and will be filling in and taking care of our accounting needs until the position is filled on a longer term basis. His email address is: kcosta@uptonma.gov in case you need his services.
- Mark your calendars for Loyalty Day. We were contacted by the organizer to let us know that the parade is scheduled for Sunday, April 28th this year.
- The Town Hall Renovation Committee met one final time this week prior to the bids going out for the construction project on March 13th. The Committee established a list of four alternates to the bid which are items we'd like to have in the project, but could be omitted if the overall project cost is higher than we want to recommend at Town Meeting. We were pleased that the architect and the lighting designer worked harder to look for fixtures for the public spaces of the building that were more cost efficient than those first proposed. This was a worthwhile endeavor as the "in stock" fixtures proposed are about \$800 less than the originals, and they have the historic look that we believe is important. They have also made some other modifications to the design and building systems that they believe will bring the construction cost down by about \$50,000.

The Town Clerk and I also met with representatives of United Parish Church and reviewed the options for the parking lot. They have chosen the simpler plan that achieves the highest number of parking spaces. We will be pricing out this option as soon as the plans are done, but expect it will be less expensive to build than the original. We anticipate sending a draft lease for consideration by the Diocese of Worcester for Holy Angels Church.

- The Town Report is off to the printer! Thanks to all for submitting your reports, and especially to Sandy for her hard work pulling it all together into a book the Town will be proud of.
- Just a reminder to all that the warrant closes for the annual Town Meeting on March 15th. At this writing there are 41 articles included. We anticipate that any business that would have been the subject of a special meeting this spring will also be taken up that night rather than scheduling a second meeting. Thus if you have any business that needs attention this spring please let me know!